

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend claim 1 as follows, cancel claims 2-21 without prejudice and add new claims 22-40:

1. (Amended) An aqueous sol containing silica-based particles, which sol has:

- (i) an S-value within the range of from 10 to 45%;
- (ii) a viscosity within the range of from 5 to 40 cP; and
- (iii) a molar ratio of SiO_2 to M_2O , where M is alkali metal or ammonium, within the range of from 10:1 to 40:1; and
- (iv) the silica-based particles have a specific surface area within the range of from 550 to 725 m^2/g .

22. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 1, wherein the S-value is within the range of from 20 to 40%.

23. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 1, wherein the sol has a molar ratio of SiO_2 to M_2O , where M is alkali metal or ammonium, within the range of from 15:1 to 30:1.

24. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 1, wherein the sol has pH of at least 10.6.

25. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 1, wherein the sol has a viscosity within the range of from 7 to 25 cP.

26. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 1, wherein the sol has a molar ratio of Al_2O_3 to SiO_2 within the range of from 1:4 to 1:1500.

27. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 1, wherein the sol has a molar ratio of B, where B is boron, to SiO_2 within the range of from 1:4 to 1:1500.

28. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 1, wherein the sol has a molar ratio of Al to B, where B is boron, within the range of from 100:1 to 1:100.

29. (New) An aqueous sol containing silica-based particles, which sol has:

- (i) an S-value within the range of from 10 to 45%;
- (ii) a viscosity within the range of from 5 to 40 cP; and
- (iii) a silica content of at least 10% by weight; and
- (iv) the silica-based particles have a specific surface area within the range of from 550 to 725 m²/g.

30. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 29, wherein the S-value is within the range of from 20 to 40%.

31. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 29, wherein the sol has a pH of at least 10.6.

32. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 29, wherein the sol has a silica content within the range of from 12 to 20% by weight.

33. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 29, wherein the sol has a viscosity within the range of from 7 to 25 cP.

34. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 29, wherein the sol has a molar ratio of SiO₂ to M₂O, where M is alkali metal or ammonium, within the range of from 10:1 to 40:1.

35. (New) An aqueous sol containing silica-based particles, which sol has:

- (i) an S-value within the range of from 10 to 45%;
- (ii) a viscosity within the range of from 7 to 25 cP;
- (iii) a silica content of at least 10% by weight;

- (iv) a molar ratio of SiO_2 to M_2O , where M is alkali metal or ammonium, within the range of from 10:1 to 40:1; and
- (v) a pH of at least 10.6.

36. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 35, wherein the silica-based particles have a specific surface area of at least $300\text{m}^2/\text{g}$ up to $1050\text{m}^2/\text{g}$.

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37. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 35, wherein the silica-based particles have a specific surface area within the range of from 775 to $1050\text{m}^2/\text{g}$.

38. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 35, wherein the silica-based particles have a specific surface area within the range of from 550 to $725\text{m}^2/\text{g}$.

39. (New) An aqueous sol containing silica-based particles, which sol has:

- (i) an S-value within the range of from 10 to 45%;
- (ii) a viscosity within the range of from 5 to 40 cP;
- (iii) a silica content of at least 10% by weight;
- (iv) a molar ratio of SiO_2 to M_2O , where M being alkali metal or ammonium, within the range of from 10:1 to 40:1; and
- (v) the sol is modified by an aluminium-containing compound, a boron-containing compound or a mixture thereof.

40. (New) The aqueous sol according to claim 39, wherein the silica-based particles have a specific surface area of at least $300\text{m}^2/\text{g}$ up to $1050\text{m}^2/\text{g}$.

IN THE ABSTRACT:

Please add the following abstract on a separate page following the claims:

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Abstract of the Disclosure

An aqueous sol containing silica-based particles which has an S-value within the range of from 10 to 45%, a viscosity within the range of from 5 to 40 cP, and a molar ratio of SiO_2 to M_2O , where M is alkali metal or ammonium, within the range of from